



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Sarah Ardalani
Public Information Officer
213-257-2000
SArdalani@da.lacounty.gov
Twitter: @LADAOOffice

August 5, 2015

Three Los Angeles County Residents Honored for Acts of Bravery

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today recognized three Los Angeles County residents who acted bravely and at considerable personal risk to help crime victims in the Long Beach/South Los Angeles area.

The award recipients include a man who helped deputies capture an armed robber using a GPS locator, a woman who aided an elderly disabled man beaten by his girlfriend and a man who rescued two women from a violent sex trafficker.

"Today we commend the acts of heroism demonstrated by these everyday people," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. "They stood up for victims of crime and played pivotal roles in the prosecution of each case. I am proud to be in the presence of these very special people whose steadfast conviction helped attain justice."

The District Attorney's Office presents Courageous Citizen Awards several times a year to people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in criminal prosecutions, aiding victims, preventing crimes, or capturing suspects.

The honorees are:

Joshua White, 28, of Los Angeles (Case no. NA095730)

Mr. White rescued two women and helped put a violent sex trafficker behind bars.

On May 15, 2013, Mr. White was leaving a Century City mall when he was approached by two women. They told him they had been forced into prostitution. When they tried to escape, the women said the physically abusive pimp locked them in a car while he went into the mall. He told them that he was going to take them across states lines.

In the mall parking lot, the women left the vehicle and ran to Mr. White for help. As Mr. White listened to their story, he knew these were serious and violent crimes. He drove them to a police station so they could report the crimes. The next day, Long Beach police arrested the suspect. Mr. White testified against the pimp without hesitation, strengthening the prosecution's case.

A jury convicted the human trafficker of two counts of pimping, two counts of pandering by procuring and one count each of human trafficking to commit another crime, sodomy by use of force, forcible rape, aggravated mayhem and kidnapping. On Sept. 18, 2014, he was sentenced to 47 years and four months to life in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

Rosa Almanza, 21, of Gardena (Case no. NA099654)

While riding in a car in Long Beach, Ms. Almanza witnessed an older disabled man being attacked and stopped to help.

On July 13, 2014, Ms. Almanza was a passenger in a vehicle, when she noticed a woman with a metal cane approaching an older man. Ms. Almanza attempted to warn the man that he was in danger, but it was too late. The blind 63-year-old man was hit over the head several times.

Alarmed, Ms. Almanza asked the car's driver to make a U-turn and stop. She saw the victim bleeding profusely from the head. Ms. Almanza called 911 and waited with the victim until police arrived. She provided a statement to police and offered the only eyewitness testimony at the trial. Without her help, the attacker likely would have been acquitted because the victim recanted his story – the attacker was his girlfriend.

A jury found the female defendant guilty of one felony count of injuring a boyfriend. On March 16, 2015, she was sentenced to 19 years in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

Luis Moreno, 27, of Los Angeles (Case no. TA133812)

With quick thinking and swift action, Mr. Moreno foiled a robbery and helped sheriff's deputies catch the suspect.

On June 15, 2014, an armed man entered a wireless phone store in Carson. He announced he was robbing the business and pushed employees and customers to the back of the store. The armed man handed a trash bag to Mr. Moreno, a store employee, and demanded he fill the bag with phones. Mr. Moreno intentionally placed an iPhone dummy, which had an active GPS locator, into the bag. The robber left the store.

When deputies arrived, Mr. Moreno told them the dummy phone was in the robber's bag and should help them locate the suspect. The robber's location was identified and he was arrested with the stolen property.

On June 10, 2015, the defendant pleaded no contest to kidnapping and second-degree robbery and was sentenced to 30 years in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

#

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.